United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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Mr. Raymond Aker
President, Drake Navigators Guild
2605 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, California 94306

Dear Mr. Aker:

Thank you for your recent letters to President Carter and Secretary of the Interior Andrus concerning Sir Francis Drake's landing site in California. The enclosed folder describing the Plate of Brass is a particularly handsome item.

We commend the Drake Navigators Guild for its laudable efforts to locate and study documentary and physical evidence that might lead to the unquestioned identification of the landing site, and hope that they will continue. Your letter contained two specific requests--the creation of a study group or panel of authorities to review and render a decision on the Drake landing site, and the designation of that site as a national historic landmark.

We do not favor the creation of a study group either by this Department or by the National Park Service. As you indicate, a three member committee established by the National Park Service addressed this issue in 1971 through an analysis of a report prepared by your organization and concluded that, though strong evidence pointed toward Drake's Bay as the site of Drake's landing, solid evidence supporting this claim is scarce and available evidence is not conclusive. As we understand it, no additional solid evidence has been uncovered since that time which would warrant the establishment of a second investigative panel.

It is our understanding also that the State of California has since addressed this matter by giving the responsibility for the designation of a Drake landing site to the State's Historic Resources Commission. We understand that this commission has already indicated

that it is not possible to designate a particular landing site at this time. Since this commission has the responsibility for designating a Drake landing site, the establishment of a Federal group for the same purpose appears unnecessary.

As long as there is continued doubt about the location of Drake's landing, it seems inadvisable for the Secretary's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments to consider any of the potential sites for designation as a national historic landmark.

Sincerely yours,

Curtis Bohlen

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior